



UNITED STATES SENATE
**REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE**

Larry E. Craig, Chairman
Jade West, Staff Director

May 7, 2001

Senate on Tuesday to Vote on Craig Amendment to S. 1

Tying Education Dollars to Achievement

While education spending – both federal and overall – for students in grades K-12 has risen dramatically since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed in 1965, student achievement has not risen. Yet the federal government continues to reward states and schools for leaving children behind.

- Adjusted for inflation, the amount of money spent per public school student has nearly doubled over the past 30 years, from \$3,940 in 1969-70 to \$7,597 in 1999-2000 (source: U.S. Dept. of Education).
- Despite doubling the amount of money spent per student, test scores in reading, math, and science have remained flat over the same period (source: National Assessment of Educational Progress).
- In 1965, the federal government enacted a program – now known as Title I – to eradicate the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers.
- Thirty-six years later that achievement gap persists, unaffected by the \$120 billion the federal government has thrown at the problem.
- In fact, in 1996 the Department of Education reported, “The progress of [Title I, Part A] participants on standardized tests and on criterion-referenced tests was no better than that of nonparticipants with similar backgrounds and prior achievement.”

Despite these facts, some still believe more money is the way to turn around failing schools.

It makes no sense to keep throwing money at a problem that history shows money cannot fix. And it is a breach of trust with American taxpayers to keep throwing their good money after bad, **knowing** that simply spending more of their money will not fix our schools.

The “Tying Education Funding to Achievement” Amendment

Senator Craig has introduced an amendment to S. 1, the “Better Education for Students and Teachers” (BEST) Act, that would stop this trend.

- The Craig Amendment simply provides that states must show adequate gains in student achievement to obtain an increase in ESEA funds for the following year.
- The amendment would use the bipartisan agreement’s definition of adequate yearly progress.
- The Craig amendment would not cut education spending. In fact, it would hold states harmless at fiscal year 2001 funding levels and would even allow failing states to receive an inflation adjustment.
- It would not take away a dime of the additional Title I funding added by the Dodd-Collins amendment.
- However, the Craig amendment would stop rewarding states for leaving children behind. It would demand accountability for the use of taxpayer dollars and give states an added incentive to boost student achievement.

The Craig Amendment is an attempt to focus our educational system on what will best serve students, to stop the federal government from throwing good money after bad programs, and to demand accountability from those who take taxpayer funds.